

Tuesday, 24 November 2009, 14:00

SIPDIS

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TAGS PREL, PGOV, MARR, ECON, BE, AF

LEADERS DURING THE SECRETARY'S DECEMBER 3-4 VISIT TO BRUSSELS

REF: A. BRUSSELS 1498 B. BRUSSELS 1493 C. BRUSSELS 1552

Classified By: Ambassador Howard Gutman, reason 1.4(b) and (d).

TAKING A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN EUROPE

12. (C) For the past few months, Embassy Brussels has been working to set the stage for a change in Belgium's self-concept as a small, meek country.

13. (C) Nevertheless, the new Defense Minister, Pieter De Crem, with sometimes grudging support from Leterme and others in the cabinet, reorier

15. (C) The Embassy has been encouraging Belgium to take a leadership role in Europe in the closure of the Guantanamo detention center. In Octo

16. (C) With three regions, three linguistic communities, seven parliaments and a myriad of political parties, domestic politics and the divisi

17. (C) Central Africa is a special interest of Belgium, as the former colonial power in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda and

14. (C) On the other hand, Belgium's contributions to civilian development in Afghanistan have not kept pace. In April 2009, the GOB announced

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foreign minister, Karel De Gucht, last February, you discussed naming a bilateral task force to meet in Washington to discuss security sector r

18. (S) Belgium has a special interest in nuclear non-proliferation issues because it participates in NATO's nuclear forces at the Kleine Brogge

19. (C) Belgium shares our concern about Iranian efforts to develop a nuclear capability. It supports strengthened sanctions in the EU and UN in

10. (C) One issue the Prime Minister or Foreign Minister may raise is a request for support for the candidacy of former Belgian Foreign Minister